

Siblings argue about brother

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My father recently passed away. Dad was helping to support my 43-year-old brother, "Ben," who suffers from depression and is on disability. Ben doesn't work and spends a great deal of time in bed or buying liquor and lottery tickets. He's always just a little bit out of it, and I think his antidepressants, along with his alcohol and drug use, have exacerbated the problem. He's been under psychiatric care for 20 years, but he is still drowning in his depression. He recently completed his second college degree and is sending out resumes, but we aren't too optimistic. He has never held a real job.

Ben does not pay any bills, nor does he do much around the house to make up for it. My sisters occasionally clean the house, and my sister-in-law cuts his grass. Afterward, they scream at the rest of us about all the work they do without our help.

There are six siblings. The house is in four of our names, but no one wants it. There is a life insurance policy and a will that divides everything equally, but Ben's share is controlled by one sister who oversees his expenditures.

Are we supposed to use the

Annie's Mailbox

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money from the will to keep Ben in the house? Is this our moral responsibility? Would it be better to sell the house and move Ben into an apartment that's more manageable? None of us wants to pay out of our own pockets for repairs. Do we support Ben until the money runs out and the house falls apart? I don't want to be greedy, but I also don't want to be foolish. All we do is argue about this. Any suggestions? — Ben's Brother

Dear Brother: You do have a moral obligation to help your brother so he doesn't end up on the street. But it also seems that his current medication and therapy are not helping, and it may be time to get a second opinion about his medical care. Also, it could be more practical to sell the house and move Ben into a place that is less expensive to maintain so that

his share of the money lasts longer. This will become a bigger issue as the house becomes more dilapidated.

Since you and your siblings are arguing about this, we urge you to speak to an experienced estate lawyer, who can discuss the various ways to deal with Ben and mediate whatever decisions you make. You all seem like caring siblings. Please don't let this create an estrangement.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "A Concerned Daughter and Mom-to-Be." You could be very helpful in reducing stigmas about brain disorders by gently reminding readers that her mother isn't bipolar, but has bipolar disorder — just as we wouldn't say that someone is cancer, but has cancer.

My neuro-psychiatrist friends are now using the term "brain disorder" instead of "mental illness" because the latter perpetuates the notion that it's not a physical illness. But the brain is also part of the body. Thank you. — M.

Dear M.: You make some excellent points. Often, we can change perception by changing terminology. We will try to keep your suggestions in mind for future columns.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Making amends will fix what's broken, even though you don't feel you're really to blame. Forget about the blame for now while you focus on helping the other person feel better.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be in charge of molding a young mind — maybe your own, maybe someone else's. Get the best information and the best teachers. Ask for recommendations.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Mild interest soon turns to fascination and then to wanting. Don't act on this now, especially if it has to do with making a purchase or a commitment. You could feel totally different tomorrow.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Volunteer. Don't be worried that you'll get burned out by selfless service, because this actually will be what energizes you. It's the things you do for compensation that may be draining.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Impulsiveness isn't always ill informed. You'll get information in a psychic flash. Somewhere in the back of your mind you're thinking of the long-term benefits even as you follow a spontaneous impulse.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Once you've taken the time to learn the etiquette, the protocol or simply the rules by which a group of people abide, you'll be accepted. That's when you'll be able to totally relax and let your natural inclinations guide you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The main reason to be mellow and patient now is not that it will make another person's life more pleasant (though it will); it's because you'll feel very guilty and sorry shortly after you

lose your cool.
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You don't have to place a personal ad to attract what you're looking for. However, writing one up (just for you) would be a helpful exercise to keep you focused. You might be surprised with what you come up with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Interesting people have a way of heating up your fire-sign energy. This is how you're able to melt through a layer of ice that someone has taken years to cultivate.

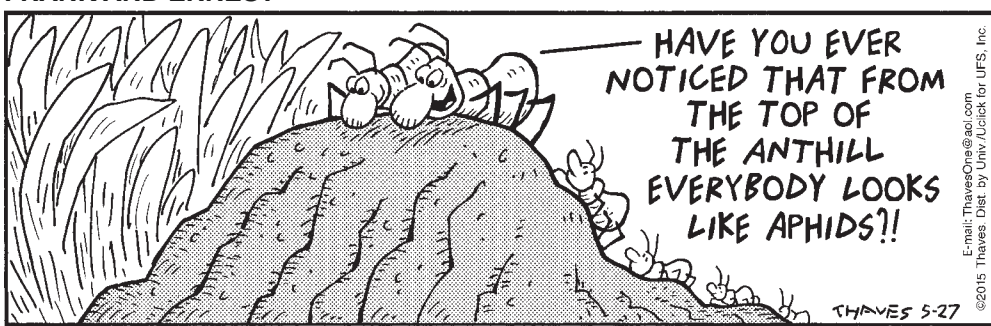
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You may find yourself stretching to meet one of your many fiscal responsibilities and perhaps feeling a tad resentful that you can't have more fun with your money. Be patient. All in due time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're endowed with aesthetic and creative gifts, and you'll use them to give your environment a more pleasing sheen. Friendships, however, are your greatest work of art.

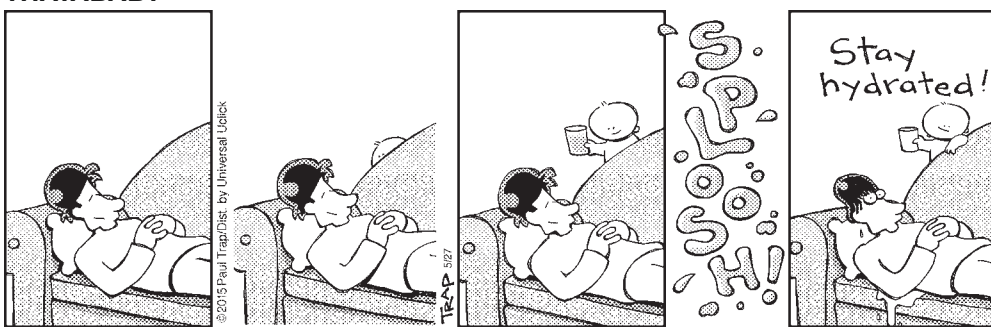
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Relax and see where life takes you. Floating with the tides might be considered passive, but right now it will open more opportunities for you than trying to row against the current.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 28). A positive spin on your history will give you a secure basis on which to accept this year's copious bounty. Your project catches fire in June. Reinvest the windfall that comes of this. October and February are the times to make grand plans for fun and charity — the events you pull off will change lives, including your own. Capricorn and Taurus people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 20, 1, 22 and 14.

FRANK AND ERNEST



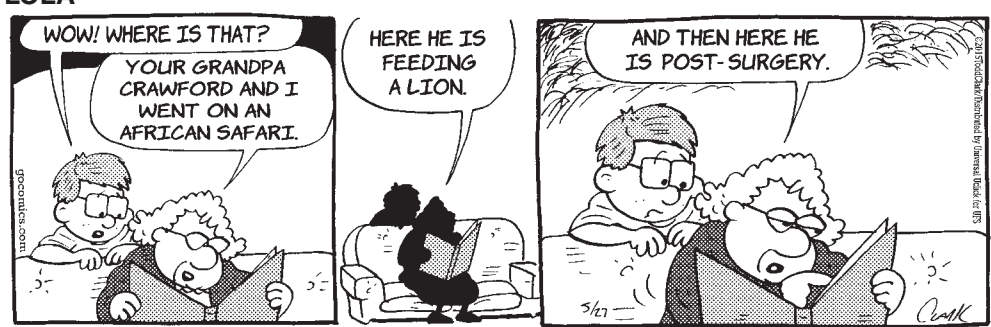
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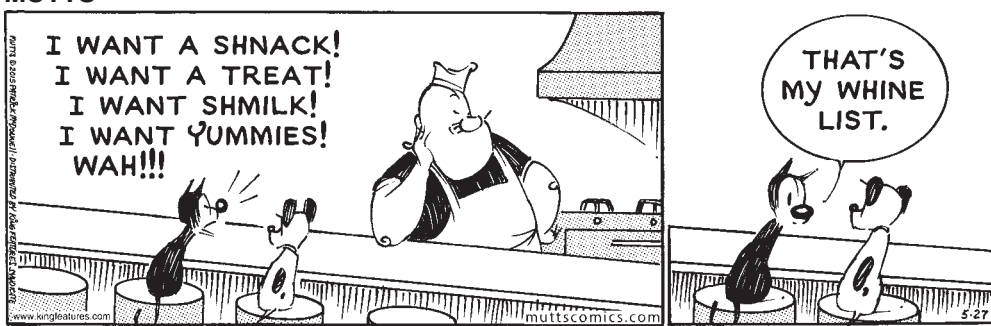
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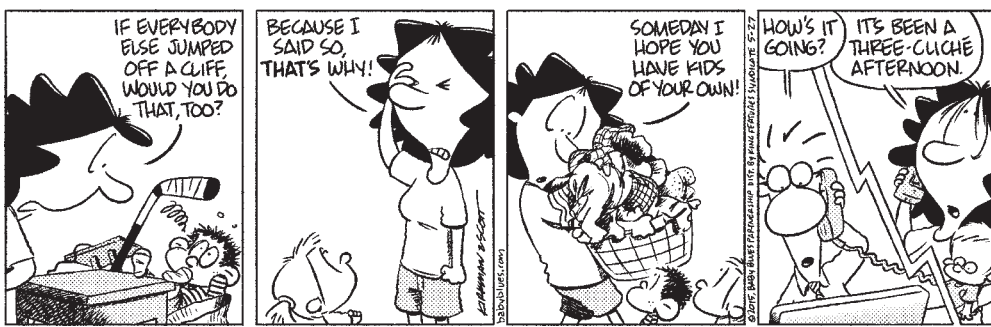
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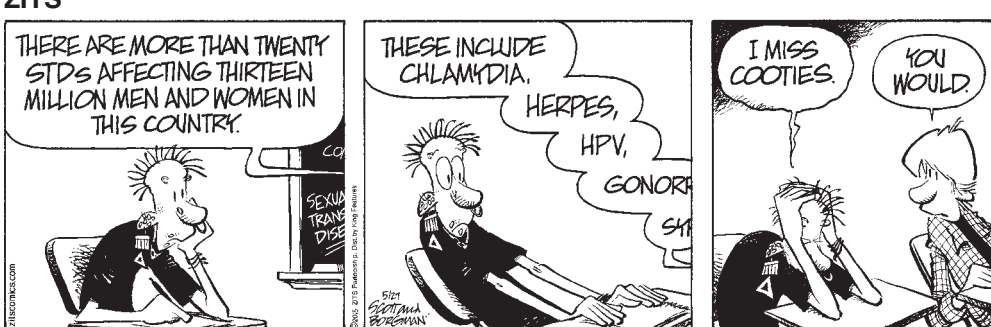
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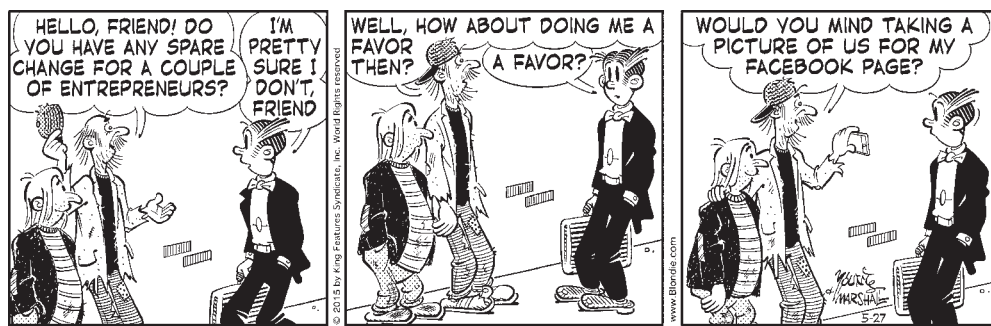
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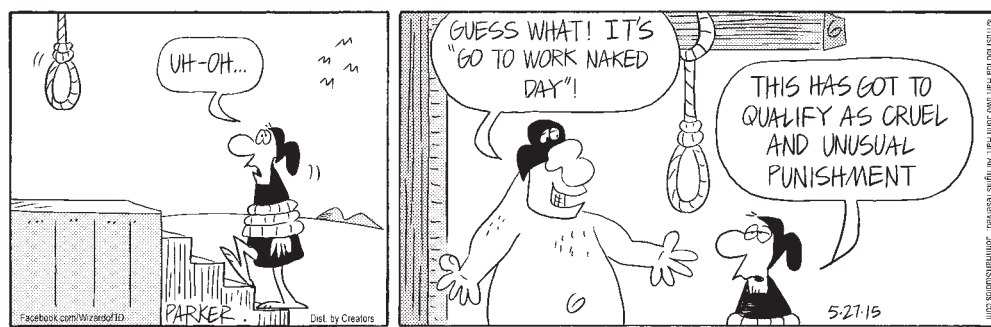
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